

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 21, 2002

Present: Candace Havens (Chair) Ald. Samuelson, Police Captain Sbordone, Evelyn Addante (Transportation Planning Coordinator) Nina Wang (Traffic Engineer) Rosalie Myers (Clerk)

Also Present: Ald. Bullwinkle, Lipsitt, Linsky, Baker, Ciccone

#324-02 ALD. SALVUCCI submitting on behalf of Franchi Management Company, No Parking on the east side of North Street from 129 to 151 North Street. (Ward 3)

ACTION: DENIED 5-0

NOTE: Ald. Salvucci was present for this discussion. Traffic Engineer Nina Wang said a parking study had been done which revealed when cars are parked bumper to bumper, site lines are blocked. She also said it is difficult to see oncoming cars in the northbound direction. Ms. Wang said the street is wide enough to support parking and would only recommend a restriction of 150 ft. on the east side.

Ralph Collins of 151 North Street said the driveway signs recently installed have been very helpful. He was concerned that if no parking were imposed, it would be a hardship for his visiting family members.

Joan Luthy of 137 North Street was present and explained that she was not in favor of any parking restriction. In her opinion, cars should enter at North Street and exit at Farwell Street.

The Committee agreed to deny this petition 5-0.

#296-02 ALD. CICCONE No Parking on MAGUIRE COURT, both sides, in accordance with special permit #391-95, granted to GM Auto Body, Inc. on 12/18/95) (Ward 2)

ACTION: APPROVED 5-0

NOTE: Ald. Ciccone explained that one condition of the Board Order granted by the Board of Aldermen stated that the petitioner shall place no parking on the Maguire Court side of the building to prevent customers and employees from parking on Maguire Court. Since 1995, Ald. Ciccone said there have been parking problems causing many complaints to be

forwarded to the Inspectional Services Department. There is no authority given to Inspectional Services or the Police Department regarding enforcement. Ald. Ciccone brought the item forward so that an ordinance could be enforced that would not allow parking on either side.

Nina Wang said a parking study was done that showed that during most of the day people do not park there, but at times there was parking in the morning on the Crafts Street end. She told the Committee that Maguire Court is a Private Road. Due to the nature of the street, several businesses use this Court for trucks. She went on to say, in her opinion, there should be no parking on both sides of the area. She would recommend that because this is such a tight area that the entire length should have no parking. Ald. Ciccone disagreed as he said businesses have been operating for years in this area. He further stated that this condition was part of the final Land Use Committee board order. There have been violations but no way to handle enforcement, as there are no ordinances on the books. Ald. Ciccone's opinion was there should be no parking both sides on the property by GM Auto Body, Inc.

Ald. Samuelson asked about public safety in the area. Ms. Wang said ideally parking should be restricted on the entire street. Ald. Ciccone reiterated that an agreement had been signed by the Board of Aldermen and he strongly felt it should be complied with. Correspondence has been received from Attorney Jason Rosenberg, which is attached to this report.

President Lipsitt questioned the standards that are needed to apply parking restrictions on private ways and felt it would be useful to receive some guidance from the Law Department.

Captain Sbordone reported that Officer Glenn had gone out to this location in June and did an investigation in this area. It was after Officer Glenn spoke to Mr. Mourgis, the owner of GM Auto, that two signs were posted. Captain Sbordone has driven by and unfortunately was not able to enforce those signs. Ms. Wang said installing signage would be a problem as there are no curbs making it difficult to install poles.

Mr. Ralph Schiavone who has a business on Maguire Court testified Mr. Mourgis conducts much of his business on the street and often uses his property for turnarounds. He stated Mr. Mourgis should abide by the rules of the board order granted by the Board of Aldermen. Mr. Bierfield of 49 Crafts Street pointed out that large trucks have difficulty making turns and this area is hazardous.

Ald. Ciccone said this issue probably could be handled in a more appropriate way by Public Safety and said when this item comes to the floor of the Board, he will move to send to the Public Safety/Transportation Committee.

Ald. Samuelson made a motion for no parking on Maguire Court. The Committee approved 5-0.

#438-02

ALD. BAKER, SAMUELSON, AND SANGIOLO requesting consideration of limited parking restrictions on the portion of SUFFOLK ROAD from approx. 163 through 217, 10-34 OLD ENGLAND ROAD, and 11-18 CLOVELLY ROAD, all adjacent to or near the Houghton Garden/Webster Conservation area on Suffolk Road, in order to complement existing parking restrictions on Woodman Road and other streets near the Houghton Garden. (Ward 7)

ACTION:
NOTE:

HELD; (TRIAL APPROVED 3-2 Havens, Wang opposed); See Report
Ald. Baker explained that there are patterns of restrictions in the area near Houghton Garden, but not on Suffolk Road next to it. There are long-standing parking restrictions on Old Orchard Road, Woodman Road, and Lawrence. Cars with Boston College parking stickers and some with out-of-state license plates, likely students, have begun to park on Suffolk Road next to Houghton Garden over the last year or so. Boston College has a strict policy not allowing students to have cars on campus. Boston College also allows free parking in its garages and some fee parking next to buildings for its staff. Boston College wrote a letter back in March to staff parkers and asked they refrain from parking on the surrounding streets and to please use the existing parking on campus. Unfortunately, the number of cars have increased in number. Up to 20 cars have been parking along Houghton Garden, also around Woodman and Old England. Ald. Baker said that part of the difficulty is how this can be handled. The Parking and Transportation Committee of the Chestnut Hill Association has been looking into this and asked Ald. Baker if he would docket this item, and Ald. Samuelson and Sangiolo joined with him. The Houghton Garden, which is city conservation land, is currently undergoing renovations and has been closed for the past three or four weeks. Ultimately when the renovations are finished, it will become handicapped accessible. Ald. Baker said the neighborhood group would like to try a trial for a two-hour restriction in this area, more specifically, a trial of a two-hour parking restriction next to the Garden to see if that would move some of the parkers back to the College. He also indicated he understood that the College would be supportive of this request. Robert Hanss of 207 Suffolk Road and Janet Huettig of 217 Suffolk Road were also present for this discussion and spoke in favor of restrictions.

Nina Wang did a traffic study, which found from twelve to twenty-four cars parked. The parking pattern is very clear with all cars parked on the garden side which is along the fence. On Woodland and Lawrence, there is a parking restriction. Those streets are much narrower than Suffolk Road. The narrowest portion of Suffolk Road is 29 feet and the majority of the street is 32 ft. wide. The street is wide enough to support on-street parking. Since this street acts similar to a dead-end, there is very minimal through traffic. From an engineering point, Ms. Wang stated, there is no safety issue to restrict parking on the street. If the parking restriction is just for BC staff and students, that in Ms. Wang's opinion is a different issue.

Ald. Baker said cars often park on the City's land, off the roadway itself. Ald. Samuelson noted that if people park on the City's sidewalk right-of-way that would be illegal. When the restoration of the garden is complete, the intent is to improve that boundary by planting shrubs. Candace Havens asked if there would be formalized parking. Ald. Baker said there would not be formalized parking but there would be handicapped spaces as requested by Martha Horn, the City's Conservation Planner.

President Lipsitt asked if the 29 ft. and 32 ft. mentioned were the paved right-of-way, and Ms. Wang responded it was. Ms. Havens asked if people park on both sides of the street and if they park on the city right-of-way, would that be a problem and Ms. Wang said no, as this street is very unique and there is very minimal through traffic. Mr. Hanss of 207 Suffolk Road said that at the corner of Woodman Road and Suffolk Road, since Garden construction work started, cars are also parking two and three cars along the north side of the road, and most are Boston College students or staff. Ms. Wang said that one issue that could be addressed right away would be signage, which would say no parking within 20 ft. of intersection. Ms. Huettig of 217 Suffolk Road commented on the difficult visibility coming around the corner.

President Lipsitt said she was aware that cars are parking on Suffolk Road and have been parking there for some time and was also aware of some increase in the number of cars parking. She also said that she did not doubt that the cars parking were associated with Boston College. She also said Ms. Wang could have a sign put up at the intersection of Woodman Road and Suffolk Road within a week that would help visibility coming around that corner. She continued that, in her opinion, the expectations of Boston College are too low. In fact, if the people parking overnight in an area or days at a time are students, and Boston College would like to discourage that behavior, Boston College's cooperation should be enlisted in discouraging that behavior. The City should not change its ordinances in order to get the students to move. As for the College staff, President

Lipsitt told the Council she does not object to using city streets for people to park on and has observed that the staff who are parking there during the day have gone out of their way to be considerate of the neighbors by parking in front of the park as well as in front of fences. Unless this could be dealt with through persuasion, that the effect of restricting parking in front of the park will have the result of going across the street and parking in front of a house. She reiterated that the streets are for parking and do not agree with the suggestion of a trial. If this area is restricted, she said a certain percentage of people will park elsewhere in the neighborhood if this area is controlled, and strongly supports the idea of handicapped access with marked spaces near the entrance to the park. In her opinion, less restriction rather than more would be the choice.

Ms. Wang's said there is no safety issue in this location but if we want to have the Boston College staff park elsewhere, we could recommend some type of restriction in this area. Ald. Samuelson does have issues with people parking all day on the street, and not paying for it (parking at the College). She said she is not inclined to see Boston College parking in the neighborhood. She also feels if Boston College is not accommodating all the staff and students, then they are not using their parking properly and should not be able to say they have ample parking on their site.

Ald. Baker went on to say that in his opinion this is the type of area where a trial is appropriate to see what the impact is. President Lipsitt suggested that if any action is taken, it should not be until after the construction is over. She suggested withdrawing this item and filing an item that encompasses Old England Road, Old Orchard Road, Clovelly Road, and all of Suffolk Road, and do a two-hour trial on both sides on them all, which she does not support, because that is where it will eventually end up, and see if the neighbors like it before the restrictions are started.

Chris Hill and Sue Freikof, new residents who are just moving into 163 Suffolk Road, expressed concern over not being able to have parking for their renovation contractors or guests. Ms. Huettig at 217 Suffolk Road expressed a similar concern about contractors being able to park in front of her house. Mr. Hanss expressed concern that the problem would grow as College parkers told others of their parking.

President Lipsitt questioned the magnitude of the problem. She pointed out that people working on the main campus are not going to come over to park on Suffolk Road because it would be easier to park in one of the garages on campus. She feels there is a self-imposed limit on the number of cars and maybe we are now facing the maximum burden, but understands the residents' concern that there has been an increase over the past few years. President Lipsitt feels there is a self-defined limit to the

impact, and before the Council takes action, we should notify Boston College and request some analysis of what is the parking availability is on their own sites. This would give Boston College the message that we are serious about having them as partners in addressing the issue, and it also will give us a more reasonable estimation of the magnitude of the problem. Her suggestion is to hold the item and for Evelyn Addante to have consultation with the appropriate Boston College people regarding the potential of the situation as well as the current reality.

Janet Huettig has spoken with Boston College personnel and was told that there wasn't anything BC could do to really control parking by employees and to a lesser extent students. Ald. Baker said a trial would see if people found it less desirable to park next to the garden, and whether they will go back to the campus rather than park in front of houses on streets which are narrower than Suffolk. Ald. Samuelson indicated she would support a trial of an 8 to 12 restriction on weekdays. Ms. Wang said it should be where people park now on the south side of the Garden. Candace Havens was in favor of 2 hours in the whole area, weekdays only.

President Lipsitt asked Ms. Wang to address safety issues. Ms. Wang reported that all studies show that parking on both sides of a street acts to slow things down. President Lipsitt reiterated that Evelyn Addante, Transportation Planner, while a trial was going on, to speak to appropriate Boston College personnel to determine the amount of parking involved before moving to an enormous imposition on the entire neighborhood. Ms. Wang wanted to point out that when signs are placed on a street, many residents become very upset when the signs are in front of their homes.

Ald. Samuelson moved a 60-day trial to begin in January for two hour parking from 8 am to 12 noon weekdays on the south side of Suffolk Road adjacent to Houghton Garden which passed 3-2 (Wang, Havens).

Respectfully submitted,
Rosalie Myers, Clerk